

State calls for study of Tucson-Phoenix rail line

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Associated Press

TUCSON- With money tight, state officials want to study whether a rail line between Phoenix and Tucson is really needed.

The state was recently handed \$1 million from the federal government to determine how a rail line would affect people and animals along the desert route.

The state has to match the \$1 million in federal funds and officials say the state doesn't have it.

Any transportation project that uses federal funds, which the state hopes would help pay for a passenger rail line, has to go through an environmental impact study.

Even if the study shows there's a good reason to build a rail line or light-rail system between Phoenix and Tucson, there's currently no money to build it, officials said.

State transportation director Victor Mendez has said that by 2015 the state will only have enough cash on hand for maintenance projects.

That means no rail, no new roads, no

widening projects.

Earlier this year, an initiative to raise the state sales tax



to fund transportation was on its way to the ballot. But the initiative was disqualified because supporters failed to gather the required number of signatures.

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